



# Arizona Department of Public Safety

**- For Immediate Release -**

Tuesday, August 19, 2008

## Traffic stop results in arrests and the discovery of a Phoenix “Chop Shop” by the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force

On August 18, 2008, at approximately 2:00 p.m., Phoenix Police stopped and detained three people at 3017 W. Foothill Drive for various traffic violations on a dirt bike motorcycle. A subsequent investigation, based upon indicators that the home housed stolen motorcycles, led officers to seek a search warrant for the residence.

When the warrant was served by members of the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force, a multi-agency team led by the Department of Public Safety, investigators found three stolen motorcycles and three others that had their VINs (vehicle identification numbers) ground off.

In addition, the original dirt bike the suspects were riding was also determined to be stolen. The search of the house, which operated as a classic “chop shop”, resulted in the seizure of a number of power tools used to disassemble and alter stolen motorcycles.

Arrested: Thomas Durham, 34, of Phoenix

Durham is the home owner and was charged with operating a chop shop along with other felony charges.

More arrests are pending as the investigation continues.

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